

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR MIDWEST FLOOD AND TORNADO VICTIMS AND APPRECIATION TO THOSE WHO HAVE HELPED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LOEBSACK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my sincere sympathy for individuals and families in my district, people across Iowa and throughout the Midwest who have experienced and in some cases are still experiencing severe flooding, record-setting water levels and other threatening weather conditions, including the tornadoes that swept through Northeast and Western Iowa. My thoughts are also with those individuals and families who are beginning the difficult task of assessing the extreme damage to their homes and businesses and just now starting the recovery process.

To date, the Governor of Iowa has issued emergency declarations for 86 of 99 Iowa counties and the President has declared 78 of those counties major disaster areas. Despite these dire circumstances, just days ago when back in my district, I saw home and business owners who saw their life's work washed away come together to rebuild a stronger and a better community. I was especially moved by a business owner whose company had been damaged. He was in tears talking about the situation, but his only concern was for his employees, their families and their homes.

The storms have devastated much of the Midwest, but Iowans and other Midwesterners have not lost their enduring spirit. I am extremely thankful to the thousands of volunteers who have sacrificed their free time to help their neighbors in these difficult times. I have spent time myself helping with the flood fighting and cleanup efforts and have been touched by the intensity and the commitment of the residents and volunteers, despite the circumstances. I commend them for their perseverance.

I am also extremely thankful for the hard work of Iowa's Governor's Office, local city officials, first responders, Iowa Homeland Security, the Departments of Human Services, Agriculture, Natural Resources, Public Health and Transportation, the Incident Management Team and the Iowa Insurance Division.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Rock Island Division has also been an integral partner in the flood response efforts, as well as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Small Business Administration and the Red Cross in their response and assistance.

The Iowa National Guard deserves special attention. Many of these servicemembers had already served their country overseas in Iraq or Afghanistan in combat roles. Now they were called upon to perform their domestic function of helping tens of thousands of Iowans battle the raging floodwaters.

□ 1945

These men and women deserve our gratitude and respect. Through the cooperation and bipartisan work of the House and Senate, the delegations of the affected States, the Appropriations Committees, and the party leaderships, we were able to provide a meaningful down payment of Federal assistance for the victims of this immense natural disaster. I want to thank all of you for your support so far, especially those colleagues who have offered their sympathy and assistance to me and my district personally. We have only just begun to assess the magnitude of damage in Iowa and across the Midwest.

As the recovery process continues, I hope the House and Senate will continue to work together in a bipartisan fashion to address the needs of individuals, families, communities, and businesses in all the affected States. I remain committed to working together to necessary Federal support to my fellow Iowans.

The road to recovery for Iowa and other Midwestern States will be long and difficult, but the commitment of local, State, and Federal Governments, combined with the steadfast resiliency of our Midwest families, will enable our communities to rebuild, move forward, and thrive once again.

HIGH ENERGY PRICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, the price of crude oil has doubled over the past year. Oil is now at \$136 a barrel, gasoline is at \$4.11 a gallon, diesel prices are at \$4.73 a gallon. As a result, citizens and industries across Northern Michigan and our great country are hurting. Airlines are eliminating service to 100 cities, laying off thousands of workers, and projecting up to \$13 billion in losses due to jet fuel price increases that cannot be passed on to consumers. Truck drivers are going out of business, and many more are just parking their trucks because they actually end up losing money after paying so much money for diesel. Loggers and farmers face increased costs at all stages of their operations, from planting and harvesting, to transporting their product to market. As a result, high energy prices have caused significant increases in the cost of food.

There is no way to justify the doubling of oil prices based simply on supply and demand. And despite the false promises by the minority party here in Congress, Democrats in Congress are addressing the energy issues. We are looking for more areas to begin immediately drilling for oil, conservation of energy, passing gas price gouging legislation, and ending excessive speculation in the energy futures trading market.

The Government Accountability Office found that the volume of trading

in energy commodities has skyrocketed, specifically after the Enron loophole was enacted in 2000. The Government Accountability Office also found that, while trading has doubled since 2002, the number of Commodity Futures Trading Commission staff monitoring these markets has actually declined.

Between September 30, 2003 and May 6, 2008, traders holding crude oil contracts jumped from 714,000 contracts to more than 3 million contracts. This is a 425 percent increase in trading of oil futures in less than 5 years. Since 2003, commodity index speculation has increased 1,900 percent, from an estimated \$13 billion to \$260 billion. The 1,900 percent increase in commodity index speculation has inflated the price of crude oil by approximately \$37 a barrel. Other experts estimate it could be even more.

On June 23, 2008, the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee that I chair held a hearing on the effects speculators have on energy prices. This was the sixth hearing that the Energy and Commerce Committee has held on gas prices over the past 2 years. Fadel Gheit, managing director and senior oil analyst at Oppenheimer & Company, testified that, "I firmly believe that the current record oil price in excess of \$135 per barrel is inflated. I believe, based on supply and demand fundamentals, crude oil prices should not be above \$60 a barrel."

In 2000, physical hedgers, businesses like airlines that need to hedge to ensure a stable price for fuel in future months, accounted for 63 percent of the oil futures market. Speculators accounted for 37 percent. By April of 2008, physical hedgers only controlled 29 percent of the market. What we now know is that approximately 71 percent of this market has been taken over by swap dealers and speculators, a considerable majority of whom have no physical stake in the market. Over the past 8 years, there has been a dramatic shift as physical hedgers continually represent a smaller and smaller portion of the market.

The New York Mercantile Exchange, NYMEX, has granted 117 hedging exemptions since 2006 for West Texas Intermediate crude oil, many of which are for swap dealers without physical hedging positions. This excessive speculation is a significant factor in the price Americans are paying for gasoline, diesel, and home heating oil.

In May 2008, the International Monetary Fund compared crude oil over the past 30 years to the price of gold. Gold prices are not dependent on supply and demand, and have been viewed as a highly speculative commodity. The IMF analysis shows that crude oil prices track increases in gold prices.

What this means is that oil has been transformed from an energy source into a financial asset like gold, where much of the buying and selling is driven by speculators instead of producers and consumers. Oil has morphed from a

commodity into a financial asset, traded for its speculative value instead of its energy value. Even the Saudi oil minister has argued that high oil prices are due to excessive speculation in the markets.

As former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich noted on National Public Radio a few weeks ago, the problem is the government's failure to curb excessive speculation.

There are significant loopholes that exempt energy trading from these protections against excessive speculation: The Enron loophole, the Foreign Boards of Trade No Action letters, the Swaps loophole, and the Bona Fide Hedging Exemption. While the recently passed farm bill addressed the Enron loophole for electronic trading of natural gas, a significant portion of the energy trading continues to be exempt from any Commodity Futures Trading Commission action to curb excessive speculation.

For 3 years, I have looked into excessive speculation in the energy markets. My latest bill, the PUMP bill, H.R. 6330, would end all of these exemptions to ensure that excessive speculation is not driving up these markets beyond the fundamentals of supply and demand.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ABORTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to ask a very serious question: Why is Congress, why are we, subsidizing the abortion industry?

Most Americans, I suspect, probably have no idea whatsoever that our tax dollars have enabled abortionists to establish and to run hundreds and hundreds of abortion mills throughout America. Indeed, America's biggest abortion chain is Planned Parenthood. Each year, approximately 290,000 children are aborted in Planned Parenthood clinics. Each year, Planned Parenthood gets more than \$335 million in taxpayer funds, including huge amounts from the Department of Health and Human Services' title X program. Tragically, as their business grows, and they now have some 850 clinics and they have embarked on a building binge, and this chart clearly shows that as the taxpayer funds go up, the number of abortions go up because more venues are then provided to destroy the unborn child.

It may come as a surprise to at least some of my colleagues and the American people that the babies lost and women wounded by abortion are disproportionately African American and Hispanic. A study in 2005 found that 62 percent of Planned Parenthood abortion mills are located in African American communities. And when Hispanics are included, that percentage rises to over 70 percent. Of course, every human life is sacred regardless of race, gender, disability or condition of dependency. Every human life is of infinite value. But the disproportionate number of minorities who are aborted in Planned Parenthood clinics begs the question.

Two weeks ago, Dr. Alveda King, niece of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, said here in Washington, "Defending human life is part of the civil rights struggle." She said, "We are uniting civil rights and moral rights to fulfill the dream of what my uncle called the beloved community." She goes on to say that "America needs to know that black leaders do support life. We start where life begins, with the babies, and we will march until abortion, racism, and all of society's ills bow to the truth that we are all one race."

Dr. King, who has had two abortions herself, now boldly speaks out for both victims of abortion, the unborn child and his or her mother. She has said, "The government should not be subsidizing racism, but that is exactly what it's doing through Planned Parenthood."

Mr. Speaker, it is time, it is long past time, for us to take a serious, and for some a second, look at Planned Parenthood, its origins, and the fact that since 1973, the year the U.S. Supreme Court issued its infamous Roe v. Wade decision and legalized abortion, that approximately 4.5 million babies, disproportionately African American and Hispanic, have died in Planned Parenthood clinics.

It is time to look past the slogans and the rhetoric and the cheap sophistry, the euphemisms that are used to mask and to cloak this deed that kills a child. Abortion is big business and it is destroying the next generation of Americans, and you and I, Mr. Speaker, are subsidizing it.

Tragically, the seemingly benign Planned Parenthood, which works overtime to market its image and its brand, is in the grisly business of dismembering the fragile bodies of unborn children with chemicals, sharp knives, and hideous suction machines that are 25 to 30 times more powerful than a vacuum cleaner used at home. Planned Parenthood ought to be known as Child Abuse, Incorporated for the large number of children, 4.5 million, that it has already killed and continues to kill all while being subsidized by American taxpayers. This is not a business of healing or nurturing or caring. This is a business of destroying the most vulnerable and weakest members of our society.

For Planned Parenthood, business is good. Violence against children pays handsomely. In 2006, it actually increased the number of abortions it performed by nearly 25,000, while abortions nationwide were in decline, for a total of 289,750, a new pathetic record of kids killed even for Planned Parenthood. For so-called medical abortions, Planned Parenthood quotes prices from \$350 to \$650. For surgical abortions, they earn \$350 to \$900 apiece. These fees for so-called "services rendered" boosts the bottom line of this big business.

To put the annual number of child deaths in perspective, I ask my colleagues and the American people to picture this: 71,000 fans filled the University of Phoenix stadium to watch the Super Bowl this past February. It was a great game, my team won, the Giants. But the number of unborn babies whose lives were taken from them before they could take their first breath by this one corporation in one year could have filled that enormous stadium more than four times over. Planned Parenthood is now responsible for committing more than one out of every five abortions performed in the United States of America.

If the number of abortions performed alone doesn't convince you of Planned Parenthood's agenda, just compare it with other services it provides to pregnant women. Planned Parenthood, they have got the word "parenthood" in their slogan, in their name, but they provided a mere 11,000 clients with prenatal care. You walk into what is called a Planned Parenthood clinic, and you would expect to walk out with a baby, but prenatal care is not something they put an emphasis on. That is a ratio of one parent to every 26 women who lose their children to abortion. After it was revealed that Planned Parenthood had referred a meager 1,414 clients to adoption services in 2004, Planned Parenthood stopped reporting this miniscule adoption referral number. So, again, those children who go to abortion clinics with their mothers, in utero that is, don't walk out as potential adoptees.

□ 2000

To me, Mr. Speaker, this record doesn't seem to be that of an organization dedicated to preserving women's choices. I might add that these tiny lives are being extinguished. There are thousands of American families waiting to adopt, and we all know that. There are upwards of 2 million families who would love to adopt, but unfortunately, the babies are aborted.

Finally, if that is not enough, this so-called "pro-choice" organization does everything within its power and massive budget to prevent women from knowing all of their options and from being certain that their choices are truly informed.

Let's not forget that Planned Parenthood lobbies this Chamber and the Senate and, certainly, in each legislature throughout the country, and they litigate and litigate and bring court cases